

18 October 1962

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. McCONE

Herewith is a clearer presentation of what I said at USIB this morning:

1. If the United States is prepared to live with and accept Soviet long-range missile bases in the Western Hemisphere, and is willing to live with and accept an increasing number of such bases throughout the Western Hemisphere during upcoming years, then the present situation in Cuba presents no problem whatsoever and we should merely continue business as usual.

2. But if we are not prepared for the above, then we must move at once, and take immediate action to deal with the situation in Cuba on a total basis against Communist Castro while the ownership and control of the present threat in Cuba is still unannounced.

3. The point is that if we move now, our action is directed against the Castro regime for having imported into Cuba weapons which are not defensive but which pose a clear and immediate threat to the entire Western Hemisphere. Although the source of the weapons may be the Soviet Union, and although Soviet technicians may be installing them, there has not yet been public recognition or govern-

mental announcement that there is a Soviet base in Cuba. Accordingly, there will be no direct and avowed US-USSR military confrontation. It is noteworthy that in the past the Soviets have avoided such a confrontation -- and by moving quickly we allow the Soviets an escape hatch or back-out procedure. Of course the voice level and propaganda campaign and corollary action, probably through third country involvements, could be expected to increase but not to the point of a direct confrontation of the two great powers.

4. If we wait until the Soviets, or the Cubans, or the press, or ourselves, or Khrushchev, announces that the Soviets have a base in Cuba, then there is no way that we can take military action against such a base without creating direct confrontation and without establishing the precedent for similar confrontation throughout the world. This latter possibility would appear to lead to general war.

5. In the present situation, therefore, the important factor that must be considered is time -- the degree of the threat to the United States, the state of readiness of the weapons themselves, the cost of weapons, the capabilities, and all other factors relating to the military threat are incidental -- ^{time of} the decision is the only urgent factor.

6. If the United States decides to take action in the limited time available, then its objective must surely be the total destruction of the Castro regime and the installation of a government in Cuba favorable to

Western ideology. Further, we must make clear at ^{that time} ~~this time~~ that we will not tolerate direct overt Soviet intervention into the affairs of the States of the Western Hemisphere. A corollary must also establish the principle that even if a Western Hemisphere State goes Communist, we will tolerate it only so long as it does not accept Soviet satellite status or military assistance leading toward the establishment of a Soviet base, or the acquisition of a long-range military strike capability.

Marshall S. Carter
Lieutenant General, USA

P.S. From the foregoing, it must be apparent that any diplomatic approach to Khrushchev or Castro could easily result in destroying the validity of our basic premise -- "We are preventing Castro Cuba from establishing an offensive capability rather than destroying a Soviet base in Cuba."

18 October 1962

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. McCONE

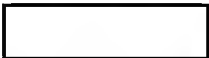
1. I understand that there is some possibility that we may intend to send an emissary to Moscow to warn the Soviets of what we know and to tell them that we will not tolerate such action and that they must immediately initiate complete removal of the offensive materials. I can understand the reasoning behind this possible move, but I am most fearful that this emissary might depart with instructions leading to negotiations or with no clear-cut decision already made here at the seat of Government.

2. It is my feeling that if an emissary is sent to Moscow, he must have no negotiating authority whatsoever and that he must transmit directly and flatly the non-negotiable position of this Government that the armaments must be removed forthwith and that a clear and continuing indication of this action must be commenced within say twenty-four hours.

3. What most frightens me is that we will sit on our hands until we have received a report from that emissary and then have more meetings to decide what was meant by what word in what sentence, and to review again the entire bidding in the light of this most recent

conversation. I consider it mandatory that the decision to act and the timing of such action be definitely made prior to the visit of the emissary, and that the Government be prepared to cancel the action only if there are clear and continuing indications of removal prior to the time limit set.

4. If we are not to be trapped by the "Soviet Base" involvement mentioned in my other paper, we must take the foregoing precautions, or else not send one at all — which would please me.


Marshall S. Carter
Lieutenant General, USA

25X1